

The Early Years of

Grover Cleveland

The First Presidency of

Grover Cleveland

The Second Presidency of

Grover Cleveland

His Birth In Caldwell, N. J., His School Days, His Legal Career, His Rise to the Governorship of New York and His Defeat of James G. Blaine For the Presidency In 1884.

WHEN the pastor of the Presbyterian church in the little town of Caldwell, N. J., in 1837 bestowed upon one of his babies the name of the Rev. Stephen Grover, a predecessor in the same pulpit, he probably entertained not the remotest dream that the boy would grow up to discard his



GROVER CLEVELAND'S BIRTHPLACE, CALDWELL, N. J.

first name and become known in world history as Grover Cleveland, twice president of the United States and for the remainder of his life "the most distinguished private citizen in the world." The Rev. Stephen F. Cleveland and his wife, who was Ann Neal, daughter of a Baltimore merchant, had a large family of children. Three years after Grover was born the family migrated, as preachers' families are wont to do. Parson Cleveland became pastor at Fayetteville, N. Y., and later at Clinton, N. Y. The father died when Grover was in his sixteenth year. The family home was then and until the widow Cleveland died in 1882 at Holland Patent, N. Y.

Grover Cleveland attended academics at Fayetteville and Clinton. He had an early ambition to go through Princeton college, but lacked the funds. He became clerk and later assistant teacher in the New York Institution For the Blind, New York city.

Fanny Crosby, the celebrated blind hymn writer, was a teacher in the same school. She and Grover became warm friends. In her reminiscences Miss Crosby writes:

He seemed a very gentle but intensely ambitious boy. Among other very pleasant characteristics which I noticed in him

as a careful, hard-working, but not brilliant, lawyer. He had no pyrotechnic, ornamental side. He simply attended to business. Though the Republican state ticket carried Buffalo by more than 1,800 votes, Cleveland was elected mayor by a majority of 3,330. Early in his term he became known as

"the veto mayor." He vetoed many extravagant appropriation bills and saved his city at least \$1,000,000.

The state of New York soon heard much of this veto mayor. He had been in office less than a year when the Democrats nominated him for governor. New York had not elected a Democratic governor since before the civil war. The Republicans nominated Charles J. Folger, secretary of the treasury in President Arthur's cabinet. Mr. Folger was regarded as a particularly strong candidate, yet Cleveland was elected governor by a plurality of 132,854 over Folger and by a clear majority of 151,742 over all the candidates. Just after he voted on election day he wrote to his brother, the Rev. William Cleveland:

If mother were alive, I should be writing to her, and I feel as if it were a time for me to write to some one who will believe what I write. I will tell you first of all others the policy I intend to adopt, and that is to make the matter a business engagement between the people and myself, in which the obligation on my side is to perform the duties assigned me with an eye single to the interests of my employers. I shall have no idea of reelection or of any high political preferment in my head, but be very thankful and happy if I serve one term as the people's governor. Do you know that if mother were alive I should feel so much

His Inauguration In March, 1885, His Marriage to Miss Frances Folsom, His Removals For "Offensive Partisanship," His "Tariff For Revenue Only" Plan and Two Presidential Campaigns.

ACCOMPANIED by his brother and sister, Grover Cleveland slipped quietly into Washington March 2, 1885, and on the 4th was inaugurated as president of the United States, succeeding Chester Alan Arthur. Twenty-eight years had passed since a Democrat had taken the oath of office as president. Miss Rose Elizabeth Cleveland, the president's younger sister, was mistress of the White House and therefore "first lady of the land" during the first fifteen months of the administration. During this period rumors as to a White House bride flew fast and thick, the president having sent elaborate bouquets to Miss "Frankie" Folsom on the occasion of the young woman's graduation from Welles college. Frances Folsom was the daughter of a former law partner of Mr. Cleveland in Buffalo. After her graduation she traveled in Europe. On June 2, 1886, shortly after her return to America, she was married to the president in the White House.



MRS. CLEVELAND IN 1886.

Unusual obstacles beset the presidential pathway of Cleveland from the moment of his inauguration. Shut out from executive favor for practically a generation, the Democratic politicians were avid for office. The president sought to adhere to a policy opposed to removal from office of competent officials except as to heads of divisions and other important officeholders, but the Jacksonian cry "To the victors belong the spoils" became so insistent that the president was induced to modify his policy to the extent of removing for "offensive partisanship" a phrase coined by him which speedily became famous. In the light of history it must be admitted that "offensive partisanship" in federal offices were exceedingly numerous in those days. Republican postmasters were plundered by wholesale.

In a storehouse connected with the of the captured flags should originate with congress. Since then many flags have been returned. President Cleveland in his message to congress in December, 1887, enunciated his celebrated proposition of "tariff for revenue only." This was the most notable incident of his first term in office. The message, submitted on the eve of the presidential nominations of 1888, amazed the nation by its bold stand against the so-called protective tariff. Mr. Cleveland was known to be in a willing mood for renomination. His fearlessness in thus daring to

alienate that large wing of the Democracy which believed in a high tariff for the support of American industries was greeted by the British press with profound admiration. Eminent political economists in the United States declared this message to be one of the ablest of presidential papers. The president's stand for reductions in the tariff on a "revenue only" basis was the subject of much discussion pro and con for many years following.

Mr. Cleveland received the Democratic nomination for president in 1888, but was defeated in the election by Benjamin Harrison of Indiana. Many Democrats attributed his defeat to his tariff message of 1887. After Mr. Harrison's election and the consequent trade of criticism from members of the president's own party Mr. Cleveland sent for the speaker of the house of representatives, John G. Carlisle, a Democrat, and said to him, "If every other man in the country abandons this issue, I shall stick to it."

Accordingly in the last message of his term he "stuck to" his stand on the tariff problem, urging congress in 1888-9 to enact laws in line with his suggestions of the winter before.

Cleveland retired to private life March 4, 1890, and settled in New York city for the practice of the law.

His Fight For the Gold Standard, His Bond Issues, His Defiance of Great Britain Over the Venezuela Boundary, His Support of Palmer and Buckner and His Home Life In Princeton.

AFTER an intermission of four years in private life Grover Cleveland returned to Washington and was inaugurated president of the United States on March 4, 1893, for the second time. The Cleveland of 1893 was very different from the Cleveland of 1885. When he began his first term he was altogether new to Washington and to national politics. He was practically an untried man in the wider field of statesmanship and was but just completing his forty-eighth year. In 1893, at the very mature age of fifty-six, Mr. Cleveland had enjoyed a distinction unique in American history—that of being elected president even at the cost of a war between



EX-PRESIDENT CLEVELAND DUCK HUNTING AT SEVENTY.

the United States and England. Great Britain had refused to submit to arbitration a certain boundary dispute with Venezuela. President Cleveland advised the appointment of a commission to determine for itself the boundary line between the two countries with a view to enforce an acceptance of this line by Great Britain. The Monroe doctrine having been accepted from the moment of its promulgation by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams as a part and parcel of sacred American policy, the entire nation stood by the president in his plucky stand. Congress also stood by

him. England drew in her horns and accepted the situation gracefully. Grover Cleveland for the time was a great popular hero. However, his defeat for renomination in 1896, had he desired the honor, was a foregone conclusion. Tariff as an issue was tumbled into that condition which years before Mr. Cleveland had described as "innocuous desuetude." The free coinage of silver was demanded by the Democratic majority. Mr. Cleveland supported the Palmer and Buckner "gold Democratic" ticket. When he handed over the governmental reins to President William McKinley, March 4, 1897, he stepped out of office forever. Mr. Cleveland settled for himself the problem as to what to do with an ex-president by retiring gracefully to Princeton, N. J., in the shadow of the great university which he as a poor boy vainly had hoped to enter. Here he built a home and grew old with his family of bright young children growing up about him. Two more girls and two boys were born.



EX-PRESIDENT CLEVELAND AND HIS SON RICHARD.

Though Mr. Cleveland never possessed in a very appreciable degree that quality which we call personal magnetism, he was undoubtedly the most popular American of his time when he began his second term as president. When he closed that term and retired permanently to private life he was one of the most unpopular Americans for the time being. He had cut loose from his party and become that amazingly unusual thing—an executive independent of the powers which made him. The great struggle for the maintenance of the gold standard against bimetalism which signaled the campaign of 1896 was taking definite shape. The president set himself obstinately toward maintaining the gold standard. In the summer of 1893 he called an extra session of congress and pushed through the repeal of the Sherman act of 1890, under which the government was required to purchase large quantities of silver bullion. The Democracy at large was amazed and enraged at this action, though a very considerable portion of it stood with the president on the issue.

To maintain the gold reserve President Cleveland from time to time made large issues of government bonds. The placing of some of these bonds with New York bankers aroused a cyclone of adverse criticism. Mr. Cleveland, of course, was in the exact storm center. Several years after his retirement Mr. Cleveland wrote a statement explaining the bond sales, defending his own course and declaring that he recalled these executive acts with the greatest satisfaction.

During and after his presidential terms the Cleveland fishing and duck hunting expeditions supplied much material to the press. In 1903 Mr. Cleveland was introduced in St. Louis as "the most distinguished private citizen in the world." By that time his political opponents in both of the great parties, generally speaking, had come to look upon him as a historical figure, and by the vast majority of Americans the venerable ex-president was regarded as a true patriot, an honest public servant and an able chief executive.



GROVER CLEVELAND IN 1884 AND HIS BUFFALO LAW OFFICES, REACHED BY STAIRWAY.

was a disposition to help others whenever possible. Knowing that it was a great favor to me to have my poems copied neatly and legibly, he offered to perform that service for me, and I several times availed myself of his aid.

One day the principal of the school upbraided the blind woman for using the clerk's time in that way. Grover told Miss Crosby that she had a perfect right to employ him in that capacity, inasmuch as her poems were used in the school and also helped to make the institution better known. He advised her to give the principal some "plain prose" the next time he should reproach her. When the official remonstrated a second time, Miss Crosby stood for her rights and won the battle.

When Cleveland was about eighteen years old, he paid a visit to an uncle living in Buffalo. The uncle induced the boy to remain and help him in compiling the "American Herd Book." Grover assisted in several editions of this work, studied law and was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-two. His first official position was that of assistant district attorney, which he held for three years, during the civil war. Two of his brothers were in the army. Grover was helping to support his mother and sisters. His salary was small. When he was drafted to military service, he hired a substitute and remained at work. Later he was a candidate for the district attorneyship, but was defeated. Then he settled down to law practice. In 1870 he was induced to run for sheriff and was elected, serving for three years.

After another interval of private citizenship, assiduously devoted to his profession, this bachelor lawyer of forty-four years was nominated for of Buffalo on the Democratic ticket in 1881. He had become known

safer. I have always thought that her prayers had much to do with my success. I shall expect you to help me in that way.

Governor Cleveland was precisely like Mayor Cleveland. He was a business governor. It was said of him that he ran the state as he would have run a railroad, mastering the details of the business so that he could run it well. The same writer declares that "he not only preached economy, but he made the state officials practice it. He vetoed bills until the legislators were wild with rage, and he forced through civil service reform."

Grover Cleveland was cordially disliked by the politicians in his party. But his reputation among the people as a plain, practicable, businesslike executive had grown so wide that in the summer of 1884, before the expiration of his gubernatorial term, there was an insistent call for him to accept that "high political preferment" which in the letter to his brother he had declared was not in his head. The great mass of the Democracy throughout the country believed that Cleveland was honest and that nothing could turn him aside from a course which he believed to be right. He was nominated for president at the Chicago convention of 1884, his Republican opponent being James G. Blaine. Mr. Cleveland received a small plurality of the popular vote and an electoral majority of thirty-seven. For the first time since 1850 the Democratic party had carried the presidential election. A man who two years before was unknown beyond his own city and county, a painstaking, laborious lawyer, a ponderous, heavy set "old bachelor," had entered the lists and swept to defeat "the plumed knight" of twenty years' national renown.



GROVER CLEVELAND AS PRESIDENT IN 1888.

war department were many crates of battleflags captured from southern armies. At the suggestion of the adjutant general Mr. Cleveland ordered that the flags be returned to the states from whose regiments they had been captured. Certain Grand Army posts became so indignant that they passed resolutions strongly censuring the president, with insinuations against him because he had employed a substitute instead of going into the army during the war. This incident, which took place in 1887, was intensified in its acrimony from the G. A. R. side because the president had vetoed civil war pension bills in hundreds of individual cases wherein he believed the applicant was not entitled to a pension. He had become known as "the veto president," as he had been the veto mayor and the veto governor. So harsh was the clamor evoked by the battleflag order that the president issued a frank statement rescinding it, explaining that he had acted without looking up the legal aspect of the case and that in his opinion any direction as to the final disposition

He was not particularly active in politics after his retirement.

In the meantime history was making. Harrison and high tariff were in the saddle. The McKinley act of 1890, increasing the tariff on wool, tin plate and other products, was followed by high prices for the poor man's necessities of life. Events rapidly were shaping themselves toward a vindication of Grover Cleveland. The ex-president attended to his law work, and the people did the rest. With the politicians, as of old, mostly in opposition, the Independent Democratic voters forced the selection of Cleveland delegates to the national Democratic convention of 1892, held in June. "Four more years of Grover" was the campaign cry. Though the New York delegation opposed him, Mr. Cleveland was nominated for the presidency the third time in succession on the first ballot. President Harrison again was his Republican opponent. Cleveland was elected, receiving 277 electoral votes against 145 for Harrison and 22 for General Weaver, Populist.